

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE

December 16, 2002

5:30 PM

Chairman Lopez called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Lopez, Sysyn, Pinard, Shea, DeVries

Messrs.: Virginia Lamberton, Harry Ntapalis

Alderman DeVries moved to recess the meeting and enter into non-public session to meet with legal counsel pursuant to RSA 91-A I (c) relative to a pending insurance claim. Alderman Pinard duly seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. Aldermen DeVries, Shea, Sysyn, Pinard and Lopez voted yea to enter into non-public session.

Chairman Lopez called the regular meeting back to order advising that on motion of Alderman DeVries, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to return to public session.

Clerk Normand stated having met in non-public session for the purpose intended it is the concurrence of committee members to continue negotiations relating to the pending insurance claim.

Chairman Lopez addressed item 5 of the agenda:

5. Communication from HR Director, Virginia Lamberton, recommending the establishment of and approval of an ordinance amendment for a new position of Airport Security Manager.

Chairman Lopez advised the committee that item 5 has been withdrawn by the Airport Director, Kevin Dillon, however, if there are any questions of Mr. Dillon regarding this position please asked. Mr. Dillon will have to provide the Human Resources Director with additional information prior to this item coming back to committee.

Chairman Lopez addressed item 6 of the agenda:

6. Communication from Human Resources Director, Virginia Lamberton, recommending acceptance of and approval of an ordinance amendment for proposed changes to 33.46 Entrance Pay Rates, Section H.

Ms. Lamberton stated this is kind of a housekeeping measure. There's nothing in writing in the ordinances that says what happens to the employee's salary if he or she is reclassified to a higher salary grade, so I think it's really important that everybody knows what the rules are when any activities are going on. It also is silent...actually it's a little bit more complicated if the position happened to go downward and that doesn't happen very often, but if it did. So, I think it's important for everybody to understand what happens when we go up or down and so the second part, the going down half is consistent with the other ordinance we passed recently that talked about putting people in the lower grade based on years of service as long as it didn't exceed their current rate of pay. In other words, a downgrade wouldn't be a financial advantage to them but at least it would keep them as whole as you possibly can.

Alderman DeVries stated so the increase would be equal to at least one annual merit step increase in the higher grade, would that continue annually until they reach the max.

Ms. Lamberton replied yes they would be entitled to step increase until they reach the maximum.

Alderman DeVries stated so if the increase in the grade was dramatic, say several classifications different and they were not even reaching the lower end of the new grade you're saying it would still increase only one step per year until they reached that?

Ms. Lamberton replied that would be very unusual that a position went up more than a grade or two. Something extraordinary, a whole major reorganization would have to have occurred where...almost like creating a higher level function in lieu of a new position or something. In all my years of doing it, I don't remember moving positions up...I think maybe four grades was one extreme maybe five or six years ago based on a major reorganization. But, usually it's just one or two grades.

Alderman DeVries moved to accept and approve an ordinance amendment for proposed changes to 33.46 Entrance Pay Rates, Section H. Alderman Pinard duly seconded the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Lopez addressed item 7 of the agenda:

7. New hire/termination reports submitted for informational purposes only.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded the Alderman Sysyn, it was voted to receive and file the reports submitted.

Chairman Lopez addressed item 8 of the agenda:

8. Communication from Scott Bartlett requesting he be considered for nomination to the Board of Assessors under Section 3.07(b) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester.

On motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman DeVries, it was voted to receive and file the communication from Mr. Bartlett and refer to the Human Resources Director.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Lopez asked for the committee's indulgence, I just want to say a few things and I don't want anybody to be offended...we, as a committee, have to make sure that when we're sending something to the full Board that we agree going in and if there's any additional information that comes before the full Board maybe we should take that item back to committee because we have to make sure...if we're not sure let's table it, let's find out the right information, if we are sure and are voting in the affirmative or the negative when we get to the full Board and issues that come up that we have not addressed, all I would ask is that we just table it and refer it back to committee so that we can handle the situation. This committee is probably the toughest committee out of all of the committees and I know Mary has been on it for quite a while, Alderman Shea, were you on it the last time.

Alderman Shea replied yes.

Chairman Lopez stated because we deal with people all the time that is what makes it very, very hard because everybody wants everything as compared to other committees. It has been suggested on a couple of occasions by the Mayor... well, the Human Resources Committee has something, you do something and bring it before the full Board...so, if there are any suggestions that anybody has...

I'll throw a few out that we should...maybe after the holidays that we should take a good look at some of these situations. I've already informed Kevin Clougherty the Finance Officer and Ms. Lamberton to look at it, I personally and this is up to the committee believe that the finance/salary pay should go back to Finance where it belongs. I don't believe the Human Resources Director should need to deal with that because the reason is that the numbers are never correct and it's not their fault down there because under the Charter, the Finance Officer has to verify all the numbers. So, every time we get numbers out of Human Resources are not the right numbers until they are verified by Finance. Now, it's just an idea and not to bring up tonight, but think about that. We should be addressing that in the future and after the holidays I think we should address it one way or the other.

Alderman Shea asked wasn't that originally in the Finance Department until Mark Hobson took it on, so that traditionally it was in Finance and apparently someone decided to move it to Human Resources and that particular department was expanded from three to whatever it is now and I think some of the people from Finance were moved to Human Resources, if I'm not mistaken.

Chairman Lopez replied yes.

Ms. Lamberton stated one person was moved and then there were two positions that were brought to Human Resources...one became the Deputy and I'm blanking on what the other one became, but I have that documentation in my office.

Chairman Lopez reiterated just think about it and after the holidays we can get into the nitty gritty of it and take a vote one way or the other as to what our recommendation would be to the full Board. Some of the other things that we should be thinking about, at least in my view...

Alderman Shea interjected was there a vote taken to move that?

Chairman Lopez replied it was requested from what I understand and research...it was requested by Mark Hobson that the payroll be done at Human Resources under the Wiczorek administration. I'm sure there was a vote taken on it, I'm positive, it just didn't happen. Also, we talk about Yarger Decker all the time and we have to look at the pay structure which everybody received and it's just an item that I think we should discuss and whatever the committee wants to do...make a recommendation, don't want to make a recommendation, leave this thing alone...but, I think we have to talk about that. Another item that I think we have to talk about and make either a recommendation back to the Board or not make a recommendation...I know the full Board has okayed this particular item...the Youth Service Officer, she's stilling getting paid as a grade 26, it's a pay grade 23

position and she's a 20. Maybe our recommendation is for the Mayor to make her a department head in order to save three grade structure, so this is something I'm asking the committee to take a look at and whatever your desires are if you don't want to handle it, fine. But, I think we have to do something for that position. The most pressing issue, I think, is whether or not this committee looks at unfilled full-time positions as to whether we want to completely freeze that for the rest of the year and make a recommendation to the full Board. I bring this up only for the simple reason that if we do not have a person in that position at the end of the year then we could save ourselves some money if that position has been eliminated or is not filled for next year (any position). For the simple reason that if we have layoffs, for example, we have to pay unemployment for how long, Ginny.

Ms. Lamberton replied the minimum of six months but it can be extended up another three months. It depends on the politics at the federal level on how the unemployment is in the nation and in the area.

Chairman Lopez stated I would like the committee to keep that in mind. I think we should fill...all the positions have been filled by the Mayor, but I think we need to come to a conclusion that unfilled full-time positions at a date not be authorized and that are vacant in the future for the rest of 2002 and 2003 must be approved by the Human Resources Committee. After the Human Resources Director presents her recommendations to the committee. This directive would apply to all positions, we must make sure if any that it has been through a process, a process where the Human Resources Director has looked at that particular position and whether it should be downgraded, whether it should be eliminated or whatever the case may be. I think we need to get to that process and we haven't been able to do...get to the full process because as you're well aware of right now the only thing the Mayor does is he fills all of the unfilled positions. So, if that's the way the committee wants to maintain that without any type of recommendation which I think we should be involved in as the Human Resources Committee since it's been thrown in our lap at the Board level. So, I just wanted to bring those items up to you because they are very important as we move forward and if there is any other committee member who would like to say anything or has anything you want to take up, let's talk about it.

Alderman Shea stated I think we should consider those items on an agenda maybe the first part of January without presentation...I think the sooner we get to those items and make a judgment, the better and I think obviously what is decided in committee...there's five of us...anyone's entitled to vote the way they want, but if it comes out 4-to-1 or something that's how we should recommend it to the full Board for discussion, but I'm in favor of getting it on an agenda and getting all of

the different questions that maybe germane to, but the head of Human Resources is involved with and helping the committee members to insights we're not able to get because of her position and our situations, so that would be what I would suggest.

Chairman Lopez stated that is what I will do, I will work with an agenda after the holidays.

Alderman DeVries stated I was going to ask if there was a reason on the last item that you brought up the unfilled full-time positions and just making a recommendation to the Board that they come through Human Resources for their approval and to develop the process prior to those positions being approved. I'm wondering why we're waiting until January to move forward with that recommendation to the full Board.

Chairman Lopez stated I don't want to particularly wait until January, but I just didn't want to throw it at you tonight, I wanted to give you a chance to think about it but if the committee is comfortable with it. I don't mind saying that all unfilled full-time positions as of this date that have not been authorized and that are vacant in the future for the rest of 2002 and 2003 must be approved by the Human Resources Committee, after the Human Resources Director has presented her recommendations to the Committee.

Alderman DeVries moved to accept the Chairman's suggestion. Alderman Shea duly seconded the motion.

Alderman DeVries asked is Ms. Lamberton in agreement that we are at the point to make that recommendation or do you feel that there are positions such as we had at the Highway Department where they were looking to hire individuals for snow plow removal, are there positions that are very contentious like that that need to be filled today that we would be causing a two-month delay in crippling an operation?

Ms. Lamberton replied I have a couple of answers to that question. As you know, no matter who puts a hiring freeze on and no matter how well intended very quickly your firefighters, your police officers, etc. get defrosted (as I call it)...the same thing with Highway. Those are the areas where we have the highest turnover, so it's just that coincidence. The other positions that have been vacant...because the Mayor still does have a hiring freeze on now, that have been vacant since last December...what's going on now with those is that the Mayor has told the department heads that they cannot include them in their complement for this budget cycle. In other words, if they were vacant on November 30th they

have to go back and defend the fact that that position is needed because it's been vacant for so long and as a practical matter that's a really wise way to look at it. It's like anything else if something's been vacant for a long time other things fill in like the sand fills in the hole, right and so all of a sudden maybe you don't really need the position anymore, but maybe you do though and so it would be up to the department head as he or she goes through the budget cycle. For me to get going and going over and talking to the employees while it's vacant to find out what the needs of the job are is a matter of...and I understand where Alderman Lopez is coming from but dependent upon what a good talker the department head is is dependent upon how much I'll be sold. It's really awkward for me to get involved in that because then I'm either calling that person a liar...you know what I mean.

Chairman Lopez stated I think it's important and that's why I'd like the Human Resources Committee involved because we are the directors from the point of the committee to pass onto the Board of Mayor and Aldermen as to how we feel and by allowing this committee to scrutinize some of the positions sort of takes away that burden from you...take it away literally because you will be reviewing that for the committee. Now, you're reviewing it for the Mayor and it puts you in a bad position, in my viewpoint, that if the Mayor tells you to do something you're going to have to do it. This way it gives you the option of coming and telling us that either this position is an emergency situation, that the rest of the Aldermen here understand that and we're not here to downgrade anybody...we need a police officer out there, we're going to get a police officer and if we have to have a special meeting to do these I think I'm more interested that more Aldermen be in the process here.

Alderman Pinard stated I don't know how many of you have read the paper today but the Mayor and most of us know what's going on, but what I'd like to see is to wait until maybe after the first of the year and really look at what's happening around the City because throughout the country you can see all of these layoffs, you can see the cut in wages, so things don't look good and I think we should swing back till after the first of the year and then really sit down with Finance or whoever it is and tell us and tell the people out there how serious the situation is and then we should act on layoffs or whatever has to be done because I'm sure that the taxpayers of the Queen City cannot afford any more hikes, it's simple as that. The senior citizens are only getting a couple of dollars in raises and Congress is getting \$15,000, so all of that is going to reflect back on the Board of Aldermen somewhere along the line and we here and Human Resources kind of control what is happening in the labor force, but we also have to think of the taxpayers. So, take that into consideration till after the first of the year and I think we might have to do something. Thank you.

Chairman Lopez called for a vote on the motion that all unfilled full-time positions as of this date that have not been authorized and that are vacant in the future for the rest of 2002 and 2003 [for the remainder of the City's Fiscal Year 2003] must be approved by the Human Resources Committee, after the Human Resources Director has presented her recommendations to the Committee. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Lopez stated just one more item. I just want to make sure that this committee is not being blamed because I know the full Board has instructed our committee to handle and I'll let the Human Resources Director address the situation with the Assessor's Office.

Ms. Lamberton stated if you'll recall at the last full Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting the Board voted for me to review or analyze the Assessors positions, mostly the vacant one, but I don't believe that to do that properly you look at just the vacant one but you need to look at all three Assessors. So, the morning after the meeting I e-mailed Steve Tellier and asked him and Tom Nichols to complete questionnaires for their duties and also to complete a questionnaire for the vacant position and then obviously I offered my help in any way I could. They have not finished that yet, they're still working on it, so I haven't been able to do anything to report back to the Board at this point in time. Once they get me the information the questionnaires then what we'll do is a desk audit, verify the duties, do the research, do the analysis and then make a full recommendation back to this committee and then we can go from there.

Alderman Shea stated there was a great deal of discussion about whether the third person would be doing assessing or appraisals and I think there was a lot of misunderstanding in terms of what role and basically how much money that person would be receiving and obviously there was no conclusion reached but there was maybe mixed feelings about whether that person should start say at \$40,000 or \$50,000 or whatever and I think that no one...at least I'm not suggesting that they start at the same pay as the Assessors presently by reason of the fact that we probably need a three-member type situation...like if Steve Tellier is the head of it and he's out somebody has to be replacing him in some role, they probably don't have to be there months-upon-months, but they have to be there for at least a week or two if he's on vacation, but that person obviously should have a role that's perhaps not second-in-command, but at least able to function and keep that office going in case...if Steve is the department head and I'm not assuming he is, but what is his title.

Ms. Lamberton replied technically he's the Chair by ordinance and you can change that at any time. You vote to make him Chair.

Chairman Lopez interjected no, under the City Charter he is the department head and the Chairman.

Ms. Lamberton stated as long as he is the Chairman. But, if he's not the Chairman then he's not the department head anymore.

Chairman Lopez interjected I disagree only for the simple reason that under the Charter he is the department head and the department head shall be the Chairman, so the only way he cannot be the Chairman of the Assessors is if he was not the department head.

Alderman Shea stated getting back to what I was saying, it was in the back of my mind that it was conceivable that the person's that's going to be hired to replace Paul who's left would be an appraiser, not necessarily an appraiser. We could say he's an appraiser/assessor in the event that there were three members that have to make decisions about abatements and so forth, but in my judgment he does not necessarily have to come in at a high pay scale.

Ms. Lamberton stated I think that's all part of the process we're going through. The current department head, Steve gets compensated to run that department and to make recommendations to you on how that department should be best run and I'm hoping that by my questions to him and filling out questionnaires which the questionnaires ask questions like what are the duties going to be for this position that that will all be telling us this is what he envisions these positions to be doing (each one), no matter what you call it; that each one would be responsible primarily for this, overlap here and then what type of credentials they would need for each position.

Alderman Shea stated my point is he can list the number of duties, but that's not indigenous to the amount of money that person should be paid. In other words, if he lists a hundred things that person should do that doesn't necessarily mean that these duties...well, because of these numbers of responsibilities he should come in at \$150,000...

Ms. Lamberton stated you're right on the mark for analyzing jobs, quantity of work is irrelevant, quantity of work is staffing. The level of responsibility, level of independent action...there's a whole list of things that you're looking for because you could have a position, say a surgeon where all they do is surgery...how many surgeries do they do a day, well, we don't care.

Alderman Shea stated appointing a third person...my thinking is that if we were to hire someone at a particular rate and let's say \$40,000 but that person is able to bring back in terms of finding out different types of situations in a community much more than what that person is worth we could benefit from which is what I was indicating. I'm not saying...I'm just divorcing myself entirely from the thinking of three people are so essential for a Board of Assessors...that is what I'm trying to get across.

Alderman Sysyn stated when you voted for the three Assessors you voted for a full-time Board of Assessors and Ted Gatsas did bring up that it is going to be hard for you to find an appraiser in the \$40,000 bracket because they make a lot more money in private practice.

Alderman DeVries stated my question would be for Ginny. When you normally go back to a department head with a questionnaire is there an amount of time that is usual and customary to get those answer back? Do you need us to establish a time frame here that you wish to operate under?

Ms. Lamberton replied I don't think at this point we do. Steve had told me he hoped to have the questionnaires to me Friday or this morning. I don't know what happened but I'll continue to nudge him to get them to me and he knows that, he knew the goal was to actually have it come here tonight and then be able to go to the full Board to kind of get it over with and for whatever reason he was unable to get the questionnaires done, but he knows he's under...he knows he needs to get it done.

Alderman DeVries stated I'm wondering if we can send a stronger message just to let him know that without a doubt we want this before us for January and we need whatever your time in order to have your input on it.

Ms. Lamberton stated it's important...assuming everything this perfect in the world that I have it at least a week because we do do desk on it and that's a matter of coordinating time, we do analysis and then when I write a letter like the one tonight was pretty simple, but a letter like this it might take me a whole day to write a letter so that it's understood, so I can't received those questionnaires the morning before the meeting or the day before because I will not be able to do my job properly and I won't do it. Frankly, I will not do it that way. I will either do it right or I won't do it at all.

Chairman Lopez stated our regular meeting is the first Tuesday of the month, so why don't we have everything completed by the first Tuesday of January, the 7th.

Alderman DeVries stated I just want to comment to Ginny that if you do not have the information with sufficient lead time that you do not wait until that first Tuesday to notify us that whatever your time frame is...a week prior, a week and a half prior if you haven't received the information that you notify the members of this committee so that we might be able to act on that.

Ms. Lamberton replied I'd be happy to.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee